



Remarks

The Office Action dated January 17, 2007 has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks have been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 5-19 and 25-28 are pending in this application. Claims 5-12, 17-19, and 24-26 stand rejected. Claims 13-16 and 27-28 are withdrawn from consideration.

The assertion, at page 2 in the Office Action, that the reply filed on December 18, 2006 is not fully responsive to the Office Action dated September 18, 2006 is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that the Applicants have elected for examination species A, shown in Figure 2, and that the amended claims filed in the December 18, 2006 reply are drawn to a species that is different from the original election. Applicants disagree with the assertion that the amended claims are drawn to a species different from the original election.

Independent Claims 9 and 17 have been amended to recite "a layer of refractory material disposed on top of said top plate". Applicants submit that Figure 2 (i.e., species A) is described in paragraphs [00015] through [00019] of the specification. In particular, paragraph [00016] describes that the base grid 84 can include a layer of refractory material covering top plate 87. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims are drawn to elected species A.

For the reasons set forth above Applicants respectfully submit that the reply filed on December 18, 2006 is fully responsive to the Office Action dated September 18, 2006.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael Tersillo".

Michael Tersillo
Registration No. 42,180
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070